

REMARKS

Claims 8-12 and 14 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 8 and 14 are amended, and claim 13 is cancelled. Support for the amendments to the claims may be found, for example, in the original claims. No new matter is added.

In view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks, reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

I. Interview

The courtesies extended to Applicants' representative by Examiner Nguyen in the telephone interview held September 6, 2007, are appreciated. The reasons presented in the interview as warranting favorable action are incorporated into the remarks below and constitute Applicants' record of the interview.

II Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §102(e)

The Office Action rejects claims 8-10 and 12-14 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,887,816 to Tanaka et al. ("Tanaka"). By this Amendment, claim 13 is cancelled, rendering its rejection moot. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection as to claims 8-10, 12, and 14.

Without conceding the propriety of the rejections, independent claims 8 and 14 are amended to more clearly recite various novel features of the claimed invention, with particular attention to the Examiner's comments. Specifically, each of independent claims 8 and 14 is amended to clarify that "the ceramic substrate is a honeycomb structure." Tanaka fails to teach or suggest such a feature.

The specification teaches that the benefit of having a "ceramic substrate in the form of honeycomb (honeycomb substrate) composed of a number of through-holes (cells) divided by thin partition walls gives the largest effect." *See* page 9, lines 21-24. Nowhere does Tanaka

teach or suggest using a ceramic structure as a honeycomb structure, as required by claims 8 and 14. For at least this reason, Tanaka does not anticipate independent claims 8 and 14.

Additionally, claims 8 and 14 require that "a pre-coat layer applied on the ceramic substrate, wherein the pre-coat layer comprises titanium oxide (TiO_2) in an amount of at least 30 mass %." Tanaka also fails to disclose such a feature.

It is well settled that a claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference. *See* MPEP §2131. Tanaka at least fails to disclose a pre-coat layer that comprises TiO_2 in an amount of at least 30 mass %.

With respect to the mass % of TiO_2 , Tanaka discloses that "a binder may be arbitrarily added to the dispersion (slurry) to thereby prepare a coating agent. The resultant coating agent may be applied to the surfaces of the various structures described below, to thereby produce photocatalytic structures. The slurry may be used in the form of, for example, a coating material or a coating composition. No particular limitation is imposed on the binder material employed in the present invention, and the binder material may be an organic or inorganic binder.... Examples of the inorganic binder include Zr compounds, Si compounds, Ti compounds, and Al compounds... Specifically, the amount of the binder contained in the coating agent is preferably about 0.01 to about 20 mass %, more preferably about 1 to about 10 mass %. When the amount of the binder is about 0.01 mass % or less, adhesion of the coating agent becomes insufficient after coating, whereas when the amount of the binder exceeds about 20 mass %, problems such as thickening of the agent arise, along with economical disadvantages." *See* column 13, lines 18-64. Tanaka thus teaches TiO_2 content not exceeding 20 mass %, and teaches that higher content amounts cause problems and should be avoided.

Furthermore, the specification discloses that "The catalyst carrier of the present invention has the pre-coat layer containing at least 30 mass % of titanium oxide (TiO_2) on the surface of the ceramic substrate, so that a reaction of the substrate with alkali metal and/or alkaline earth metal can be inhibited when a catalyst containing both or either of alkali metal and alkaline earth metal is loaded on the catalyst carrier. Therefore, the ceramic substrate shows less deterioration. Also, in the catalyst body of the present invention, the catalyst carrier having the pre-coat layer containing at least 30 mass % of titanium oxide (TiO_2) on the surface of the ceramic substrate is used, and catalyst containing both or either of alkali metal and alkaline earth metal is loaded on the carrier, so that it is possible to inhibit the catalyst from reacting with the ceramic substrate. Therefore, the ceramic substrate shows less deterioration." *See* page 3, lines 5-20. Tanaka fails to disclose "a pre-coat layer applied on the ceramic substrate, wherein the pre-coat layer comprises titanium oxide (TiO_2) in an amount of at least 30 mass %," or that "the ceramic substrate is a honeycomb structure." as required by independent claims 8 and 14.

Tanaka does not anticipate claims 8 and 14. Claims 7-10 and 12 variously depend from claim 8 and, thus, also are not anticipated by Tanaka. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

II Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103

The Office Action rejects claim 11 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Tanaka. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

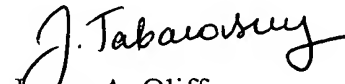
For the reasons discussed above, Tanaka fails to teach and likewise fails to suggest, all the features of independent claim 8. Claim 8 would not have been rendered obvious by Tanaka. Claim 11 depends from claim 8 and, thus, also would not have been rendered obvious by Tanaka. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

III Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the application are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,


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